

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus ~~for extending the functionality of a defective floppy diskette controller~~ limiting access to a hardware resource, the apparatus comprising a computer readable medium storing executable and operational data structures, the data structures comprising:

a determination module for identifying a hardware resource ~~associated with a computer system~~;

a welding module for inseparably connecting a persistent software layer to the hardware resource.

2. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the data structures further comprise a defense module for resisting attempts by ~~other~~ software to unweld the persistent software layer from the hardware resource.

3. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the data structures further comprise a function module for performing a desired function whenever the hardware resource is accessed by ~~the computer system~~.

4. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the function module ~~is configured to control~~ controls the hardware resource to provide a function otherwise unavailable from the hardware resource ~~as manufactured~~.

5. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the data structures further comprise an unweld module for ~~disconnecting as the exclusive data structure to disconnect~~ the persistent software layer from the hardware resource.

6. (original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the unweld module is configured to be embedded in the welding module.

7. (currently amended) A computer readable medium storing data structures embodying ~~steps for effecting executables to effect~~ a method comprising:

~~providing a computer system comprising~~ operating a processor operably connected to a first hardware resource;

~~installing a driver corresponding to the first hardware resource, and including a~~ operating the first hardware resource with a computer readable resource identifier for identifying available hardware resources;

identifying the processor, by the resource identifier, as the first hardware resource;

executing on the processor a welder to inseparably ~~connecting~~ connect a persistent software layer thereto.

8. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 7, wherein the method further comprises:

accessing, by the processor, a first hardware interface; and

automatically engaging the persistent software layer upon accessing, by the processor, the hardware interface.

9. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 8, wherein the method further comprises providing ~~executing~~ a defense module for ~~responding to attempts in response to an attempt~~ to unweld the persistent software layer from the first hardware interface.

10. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 9, wherein the method further comprises providing a controller for controlling the first hardware resource.

11. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 10, wherein the persistent software layer further comprises a function module, executable to perform ~~an extension function, the extension function being a function~~ beyond the inherent functionality of the controller.

12. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the ~~extension function further comprises a function lock for overriding~~ function overrides requests from ~~other~~ software to reconfigure the functionality of the first hardware resource.

13. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the ~~function module is configured to perform a function~~ is selected from detection and correction of a hardware defect in the controller.

14. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the ~~function module is configured to extend~~ extends the functional capability of at least one of the first hardware resource and the controller, without replacement thereof.

15. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 13, wherein the function module is configured to monitor at least one of access and control of at least one of the first hardware device and the controller.

16. (currently amended) A method for welding a software layer to a hardware layer in a computer system having hardware interfaces, the method comprising:

providing a computer system comprising a processor operably connected to a first hardware resource;

providing a first hardware interface corresponding to the first hardware resource;

installing a driver corresponding to the first hardware resource, and including a resource identifier for identifying available hardware resources;

identifying the processor, by the a resource identifier, as the first hardware resource;

executing on the processor a welder for inseparably connecting a persistent software layer to the first hardware resource precluding direct access to the first hardware interface by anything other than the persistent software layer in the processor.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

accessing, by the processor, the first hardware interface; and

automatically engaging the persistent software layer upon accessing, by the processor, the hardware interface.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the ~~persistent software layer further comprises a defense module for responding to attempts to unwind the persistent software layer from the first hardware interface~~ the hardware resource is the processor itself.

19. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising providing a controller for controlling the first hardware resource.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 19, wherein the persistent software layer further comprises a function module executable on the processor ~~for performing an extension function, the extension function being to perform a function~~ beyond the inherent functionality of the controller at least one of the processor, the controller, and the hardware resource.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 20 wherein the ~~extension~~ function further comprises a function lock for overriding requests from ~~other~~ software to reconfigure the functionality of the first hardware resource.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the function module ~~is configured to perform a function~~ is selected from detection and correction of a hardware defect in the controller hardware resource.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the function module is ~~configured to extend~~ extends the functional capability of at least one of the first hardware resource and the controller, without replacement thereof.

24. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the function module ~~is configured to monitor~~ monitors at least one of access and control of at least one of the first hardware device and the controller.

25. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein inseparably connecting further comprises rendering the connection unbreakable by other than the welder.

26. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein inseparably connecting further comprises rendering substantially impossible an insertion of an executable between the first hardware resource and the persistent software layer.